

**2009 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS
FOR THE
LICK CREEK C&H ALLOTMENT**

These Annual Operating Instructions are a guide for implementing grazing management activities on the **Lick Creek C&H Allotment** for the 2009 grazing season. This AOI is made part of the Term Grazing Permit as specified in Part 2, Number 8 (a) of the permit. The plan was developed with participation of the livestock permittees at the Annual Operating Instruction meeting held at the Council Ranger District Office on April 20, 2009. The interdisciplinary resource personnel and livestock permittee who participated in development of this plan are permittee Casey Anderson of Rocky Comfort Cattle Company, Rangeland Management Specialists Maura Laverty and Jennifer Gebauer.

These instructions are a guideline for grazing management. It is necessary to contact the Forest Service if there are any changes or additions to these instructions through out the grazing season. Refer to Part 2 of your term grazing permit for general terms and conditions which apply to these Annual Operating Instructions.

Grazing fees of \$ 1.35/HM must be paid before livestock are authorized to enter the National Forest. Payment must be made to: USDA Forest Service, P.O. Box 894183, Los Angeles, California 90189-4183. The Council District Office must receive confirmation from the Citibank Lockbox that payment has been made prior to cattle entering the Forest.

PERMITTED USE:

<u>Permittee</u>	<u>Livestock Numbers</u>	<u>Season</u>
Rocky Comfort Cattle Company	879 cow/calf pairs*	6/1 – 11/30
	308 cow/calf pairs*	6/15 – 10/9

* permit includes Wildhorse/Crooked River, Lick Creek & Bear Creek allotments

AUTHORIZED USE:

<u>Permittee</u>	<u>Livestock Numbers</u>	<u>Season</u>
Rocky Comfort Cattle Co	411 c/c Indian Creek	4/1 – 6/1
	124 c/c Bardmus Place	6/9 – 7/20
	124 c/c Gladhart	7/21 – 10/27
	411 c/c Upper W. Lick/Lower Bear	6/2 – 7/15
	409 c/c Lower West Lick	7/16 – 7/20
	334 c/c East Lick Creek	7/26 – 10/27
	410 c/c Lower West Lick Creek	11/11 – 11/30

315 c/c No Biz & Hungry on/off	6/8 – 6/20
312 c/c Crooked River	6/21 – 9/30
445 yrlg heifers Upper Salt Creek	4/11 – 6/8
52 bulls East Lick Creek	8/16 – 10/15

TERMS AND CONDITIONS PERTAINING TO SEASON OF USE AND LIVESTOCK NUMBERS:

The District Ranger may modify the season of use and livestock numbers permitted on any given year. The season of use is especially dependent upon weather conditions (annual precipitation) which influences annual forage production and range readiness. The District Ranger's authority to modify term grazing permitted use is further described in Part 2, Section 8 (b) & (c) of your permit.

Turnout will not occur prior to range readiness. Range readiness is measured by soil moisture and plant growth. Soils may be damp, but not saturated, and should be firm to avoid excessive compaction due to livestock. Grass species must be a minimum of 6 inches in height and out of the boot stage. Arrowleaf balsamroot should be in bloom or past bloom. All animals must be off the Forest by December 31, 2009.

These dates are tentative and may vary according to range conditions and utilization levels.

Notify the Forest Service at least 3 days before you turn onto the allotment.

Actual Use: The permittee is **required** to complete an "actual use" form which is enclosed and includes a record of livestock losses and the permittee's maintenance costs. The form accompanying this plan is for convenience. Any format that provides the information requested is acceptable.

Credits: All requests for refunds or credits for unused portion of grazing fees for Forest System Lands must be received in the Council Ranger District office by March 1 following the grazing season.

GRAZING PRESCRIPTION AND LIVESTOCK ROTATIONS:

The following are specific utilization standards and guidelines from the July 2003 Forest Plan. Utilization percentages are by weight and are the maximum allowed.

RAST01 - Maximum forage utilization of representative areas within each pasture shall not exceed the values shown at the end of the growing season. Variation in utilization standards in order to achieve specific vegetative management objectives shall occur with a site-specific or project-level decision according to direction in FSM 1922.5.

a) Riparian Areas: Maximum 45 percent use or retain a minimum 4 inch stubble height of hydric greenline species, whichever occurs first.

b) Upland Vegetative Cover Types: Early season or season long pastures – 40 percent use. Vegetative slow growth, after seed ripe conditions, or late season pastures – 50 percent use.

Part of good cattle management is riding to assure proper cattle distribution. In particular we want to insure that the stream banks and meadows aren't over used. These riparian areas are considered key areas and will be monitored. When an area has reached maximum allowable use levels cattle will be removed from that area. Keeping cattle off select areas and in areas of lesser use serves to prolong the time cattle can expect to stay in an area.

When an area reaches allowable use levels the cattle will be moved and kept from returning to that area. If cattle are in the final area of the rotation sequence and utilization standards are reached, then they will have to be removed from the allotment.

Livestock in units outside the season of use or on an allotment other than the one permitted, is a violation of the terms and conditions of the Term Grazing Permit.

Salting

Salting is restricted to the following:

- No less than ¼ mile from water, and not be placed in meadow bottoms.
- Placed at a minimum distance of 100 yards from roads and out of sight from roads, if possible.
- Should be moved yearly unless present salt ground is located in a rocky area where no vegetation grows.
- Unconsumed salt will be removed from the site.
- ¼ mile from timber plantations with trees less than 15 feet tall. If this can't be accomplished, the District Range and Reforestation personnel will work with you to find acceptable locations.
- Recommend use of containers and rocky areas.

MAINTENANCE OF RANGE IMPROVEMENTS:

All range improvements must be maintained prior to turning livestock into the unit scheduled for use. If an existing range improvement has been properly maintained but requires reconstruction, a cooperative effort can be made between the Forest Service and permittee to reconstruct the development, depending on material availability. Those projects to which the permittee contributes normally receive higher priority for funding by the Forest Service.

Maintenance of spring developments is vitally important to the health of your livestock and to the grazing allotment. If you are aware of spring developments that require reconstruction or extensive maintenance, please discuss this with your Rangeland Management Specialist.

The Forest Service will work with you this summer to develop a spring source in the Lick Creek Riparian Demonstration Area pasture, as soon as the NEPA process is completed. The FS will contact you when work may begin.

The FS will look at constructing water improvements at the point of Fawn Creek/Northwest of Lick Creek Road/Butterfield Gulch if time and funding permit. If able to construct a water development the Forest Service will provide the materials and the permittee will provide the labor.

The Reforestation crew is inventorying plantation fences and prioritizing removal based on stocking surveys and tree height.

MONITORING OF THE ANNUAL LIVESTOCK GRAZING ACTIVITY:

We are requiring you to report actual use information for each unit grazed because we are required to report this grazing use to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). If you have any questions completing the form, please call Maura at 208-253-0100. **These forms need to be returned no later than December 31, 2009.**

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT

There are at least eight populations of Northern Idaho Ground Squirrels located within the Lick Creek Allotment in the Cold Springs, Tree Farm, Calf Pen, Summit Gulch, Rocky Comfort Flat, Fawn Creek, and Hoo Hoo Gulch areas. Mitigation of livestock grazing effects includes avoiding trailing through these sites, as well as no salting within ¼ mile of them. All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) or Off Highway Vehicles (OHVs) are not authorized off roads near NIDGS sites. These sites must be shown to your riders to prevent any accidental use of the areas.

The Forest Service and Permittee will look at ways to graze the Upper Bear Creek Pasture the same time Bull Trout are in the area.

In the event a designated mitigation measure fails to protect a species listed under the Endangered Species Act, a change in the authorized grazing activity will occur. If proper utilization levels are reached, then livestock will be moved to the next grazing area or off the forest. If livestock grazing does not comply with the terms and conditions of these Annual Operating Instructions, then the Forest Service policy and procedures dealing with administrative permit actions will be followed.

Please review the 2009 AOI for consistency with our discussion at the annual meeting, and sign and return it to me. If I do not receive a signed copy from you within one week, this AOI will serve as the final copy approved by the District Ranger.

/s/ Gregory S. Lesch
GREGORY S. LESCH
District Ranger

5/28/2009
Date

/s/ Casey Anderson (Manager)
CASEY ANDERSON, RCCC, INC.
Permittee

5/23/2009
Date